

Directing Script (02)

By

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INT. KITCHEN - DAY

GIRL (20 years) and AH MA (70 years) are busy at work in the kitchen. Their necks are craned over a table full of cupcakes; they ice the cupcakes. (note: it doesn't have to be cupcakes; it could be something more localized)

The amicable duo chat, enjoying themselves in the process.

GIRL

...and I invited Stephanie and
Amanda too! Do you remember them?
We used to meet at the playground..

AH MA

Yes of course I remember! I used to
bring you down every evening... Ai
yo!

Grandma exclaims. She loses her focus while answering her granddaughter, and squeezes the icing off the cupcake. They laugh it off.

GIRL

Ah ma! Hahahahaha, careful! ..Ah ma
do you think I should colour this
Pink or Blue?

AH MA

Blue! Because ah ma knows blue is
your favourite colour... Not like
me... for my 21st birthday I had to
have everything Pink! The balloons,
my cake, my dress...

Ah ma looks sweetly nostalgic.

Eh? I have not shown you before!

Ah ma steps out of the kitchen. A moment later, we hear a loud bang. Girl is startled, stands bolt upright.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Girl dashes from kitchen into living room.

Ah ma is collapsed on the floor. Girl rushes toward Ah ma and shakes her.

GIRL

Ah ma!... Ah ma are you okay?!

Ah ma is out cold, but a serene smile is fixed on her face.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Girl sits in the hospital corridor, crouched over, her chin nestled into her palms, staring into the abyss. A stretcher is wheeled past her, the body covered over in white (body bag).

MOTHER and FATHER converse intensively.

MOTHER

I've messaged your brother and sister, they're coming over to say goodbye

FATHER

Do you think Richard will be able to fly back in time?

MOTHER

Ah... It'll be expensive but I'm sure he'll regret if he doesn't pay his last respects. It's just that it's so... sudden

Girl is seemingly indifferent to her parents' converse.

FATHER

...Anyway, I've called the Casket centre. They should be able to receive the body tomorrow. We can hold the service on Saturday, and have the burial...

Girl perks up at the mention of Saturday, and interrupts.

Her father does not compromise and is firm.

GIRL

But Pa, this Saturday is my birthday party

FATHER

Don't be crazy! You still want to celebrate? Not at a time like this!

GIRL

Ah ma would've wanted me to

FATHER

... Ah ma's body will rot ah if we wait for you to have your party!

(CONTINUED)

GIRL

no but I

FATHER

Don't be crazy. Funeral is this Saturday - final. Not the time to celebrate. Be respectful. You say ah ma doesn't mind? ...Over my dead body!

Father looks a little unsteady at saying that. Mother shoots him a disapproving look.

Choy ah, choy. (touch wood)

Father flustered by the argument. Girl is silenced. Phone call intercepts and ends their conversation.

FATHER

Eh, Ah bee. Yeah.. Stroke. Old age ah... these things cannot unpredict...

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Girl's room stocked with birthday party decorations. Her birthdate/partydate is marked on the calendar at her desk/wall. Birthday dress/white gown hung up. Photos of Ah ma and her tacked up.

Girl crushes birthday invites and other material, clears her desk/room of birthday prep stuff and dumps it in the bin.

Messages (either via text/facebook) friends to tell them the party is called off.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The remaining trio (Mother Father Girl) sit in silence at the dining table, eating. One seat is empty - Ah ma's seat.

(After dinner) Girl takes tray of half decorated cupcakes out from the fridge, and holds it above the bin. She begins to sweep them into the bin, then hesitates.

Gorges herself with the cupcakes (it's too painful and great of a waste to throw them), breaks down and cries while at it. (looks really silly with her mouth stuffed, and icing smeared around)

Ah ma stands next to her and laughs.

(CONTINUED)

AH MA
Meimei, what are you doing!

GIRL
Ah ma, why did you have to choose
this timing to go? Why couldn't you
wait till after my 21st?

Chunks of cupcake drop out of her mouth as she talks,
sobbing.

AH MA
What are you talking about, I'm
right here! Ah ma has always
watched you grow up.

GIRL
But ah ma, because you left we
won't get to celebrate my birthday
anymore.

AH MA
Who says we cannot still celebrate?

Ah ma takes her hand and leads her out of the kitchen.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ah ma takes the birthday invite out of the trash. Flattens
it.

Plays dress up with the girl; pulls the birthday dress over
her head, dolls her up with make up. Pulls up fairy lights
from the bin and wraps it around her.

The girl is estatic in the moment and twirls.

We see the girl actually putting make-up on by herself
(hastily done? little amateurish?)

, and twirling around alone (dimly lit room) in her birthday
dress and fairy lights.

GIRL
Ah ma, please stay. Don't go.
Celebrate with me.

AH MA
Is that what you really want?

(CONTINUED)

GIRL

Yes, it's what you would want too
right? For us to still be happy.

Ah ma holds the girl's face, smiles and nods lightly.
But Pa won't let.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Father (and mother?) has dozed off in front of the
television.

Girl (decked up in birthday dress and fairy lights) and Ah
ma peek into living room from behind the bend of the wall.

GIRL

Ah ma, go tell Pa. Tell him the
funeral can wait.

AH MA

How can I? He will get a shock if
he sees me!

GIRL

Stay Ah ma, stay here with me.

Shot of girl in the corridor, she slumps down onto the floor
(wrapped in fairy lights), alone.

INT. FUNCTION ROOM - NIGHT

(Slow motion) Balloons part, revealing a lavishly clad room.
Girl stands in the middle of room, and turns to face the
camera. She is all smiles, dolled up in a white gown and
thick make-up. A floral arc (chrysanthemums) frames her from
behind.

She mouths "Thanks for coming!". People around her clap and
throw confetti.

EXT. VOID DECK - NIGHT

(Match cut) Girl sits at a round table, prying open peanut
shells with a forlorn expression on her face. She wears a
plain white shirt (standard funeral decorum). Chrysanthemum
flowers form an arc in the background, flanked by condolence
bouquets. Languid, solemn atmosphere as others encircle the
casket in the background (vaguely visible) and sit dispersed
around other tables in the void deck.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Girl opens fridge; left over cupcake/ingredients/slice of cake sits in the fridge (labeled with Ah ma's handwriting?). She pauses at the sight of it, reaches out for it.

MOTHER & FATHER (O.S.)
Happy Birthday to you...

Girl turns around to see her Mother and Father enter the kitchen, singing, birthday cake cradled in hand.

MOTHER
Mei, I'm sorry things turned out
this way

FATHER
Of course we didn't forget

The three of them stand around the counter/table in the kitchen and share the birthday cake; just as Ah ma and the girl had done so when they were baking.